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SUBJECT: BENEFIT CONCERT FOR HURRICANE KATRINA VICTIMS

SHOWCASES GREEK GENEROSITY

¶1. SUMMARY: A November 2 benefit concert at the Athens main concert hall raised tens of thousands of Euros, all of which will be donated to the Habitat for Humanity organization in the U.S. to rebuild homes in the areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The Stavros Niarchos Foundation, in cooperation with the local Habitat affiliate (Friends of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Athens) and the Pan-Hellenic Women's Association, worked together with members of the Embassy community to plan an evening of jazz as a tribute to New Orleans. The concert, entitled "New Orleans, I send you a message" and attended by approximately 1,700 people, featured renowned American and Greek performers. Ticket sales raised tens of thousands of Euros, and a bank account was established to continue to receive donations through December 31, 2005. A tremendous success, the concert was a characteristic display of the Greek trait of pride in helping others ("filotimo" in Greek), and showcased the deep and enduring ties between America and Greece. The Embassy was pleased to have helped shape and facilitate the two months of planning that went into the event. END SUMMARY

¶2. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, several prominent Greeks and Greek-Americans expressed a strong desire to help victims of the disaster as a gesture of friendship and goodwill. A jazz benefit concert to pay tribute to the city of New Orleans was suggested, and the President of the Pan-Hellenic Women's Association's Panathinaiki chapter and honorary citizen of the city of New Orleans, Mrs. Angela Daifa-Frantzeskaki, started a committee to organize such an event. Ambassador encouraged the idea, and the committee obtained 50,000 Euros from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation to pay the costs of renting the concert hall, the artists' fees, publicity, printing, and other expenses. The Friends of Habitat for Humanity, Greater Athens also became involved, and arrangements were made for concert proceeds to assist the American chapter of Habitat for Humanity to rebuild homes in the areas devastated by the hurricane. Ambassador offered his support to the organizing committee by hosting a November 1 pre-concert reception at his residence for the organizers, sponsors and artists. Embassy Public Affairs also arranged for U.S. Jazz Ambassador Deborah Davis, along with her group "A Few Good Men," to headline the performance, with the Niarchos Foundation covering all the costs.

¶3. On the night of November 2, an audience of around 1,700 gathered at the Megaron Moussikis Concert Hall in downtown Athens to hear a superb evening of jazz music. Ambassador was the guest of honor, and messages of appreciation were included in the program from former U.S. President and founding member of Habitat for Humanity, Jimmy Carter, and former U.S. Ambassador to Greece, Thomas J. Miller. Several prominent Greeks were in attendance, including Minister of Economy, George Alogoskoufis, the spouses of the Ministers of the Interior and of Foreign Affairs, a representative of Athens Mayor Bakoyannis, Athens Vice Mayor Tonia Kanelopoulou, a representative of the archbishop, Father Iokovos Byzaourtis, spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, George Koumoutsakos, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Health and president of Special Olympics Hellas, Yianna Despotopoulou, and the spouse of the Honorary President of New Democracy, Mrs. Marika Mitsotakis. Many members of the embassy community and students of American universities in Greece (mostly Greek) also purchased tickets and attended the concert.

¶4. Committee Chairwoman Vana Lavida and the Pan-Hellenic Women's Association's Angela Daifa-Frantzeskaki gave short, moving speeches before the performance to remind the crowd of the dire need still being felt in and around New Orleans, and expressing appreciation for the compassion of the sponsors, concert-goers and performers. Greek saxophonist Dimitris Vasilakis and his trio opened the musical section of the program, and were followed by Greek soprano, Jenny Drivala, who sang jazz standards. The second act featured headliner Deborah Davis and her band ("A Few Good Men"), who rocked the hall with New Orleans jazz favorites, such as "When The Saints Go Marching In." The evening ended with a bang as two well-known Greek piano prodigies, George Hatzinassios and Stefanos Korkolis, played a lively two-piano version of Gershwin tunes, among other show songs. Each act was preceded by a short video, illustrating the devastation wrought by Katrina and the commitment of Habitat for Humanity

to help rebuild the Gulf Coast.

15. The event would not have been made possible without the support and generosity of several key individuals and organizations. The Stavros Niarchos Foundation, the Pan-Hellenic Women's Association Panathinaiki and its president, Angela Daifa-Frantzeskaki, and Friends of Habitat for Humanity, Greater Athens were all crucial players as event organizers. The Megaron Moussikis was kind enough to offer their facilities at a discounted price. A Greek owner of a medical supply firm, Nick Papapostolou, purchased 10,000 dollars in tickets for the event, and Artistic Director of the Hellenic Festival, Yiannis Karahisarides, took on the project free of charge. Press coverage of the concert helped boost ticket sales and publicized the concert's success, and of course the volunteer efforts of many Greek community members, embassy employees, and the event performers were invaluable.

16. The Embassy considered the concert a great success, not only in terms of money raised but of showcasing the enduring ties between our two nations. The ability to put on a successful event of such magnitude in only two months time speaks to the dedication and outstanding volunteer work of members of Greek philanthropic societies and of the Embassy community. The concert alone raised tens of thousands of Euros in ticket sales, and a bank account set up by the Pan-Hellenic Women's Association will continue to receive donations through December 31, 2005. The money raised by the concert and subsequent donations to the account will go entirely to the American chapter of Habitat for Humanity to help fund the rebuilding of homes in the poorest sections of the hurricane-devastated areas. The Greek sense of pride in helping others, known in Greek as "filotimo," will therefore help the victims of Hurricane Katrina for years to come, as they rebuild their homes and their lives in New Orleans and across the Gulf Coast.

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